



Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) Provincial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2021/Zoom

ATTENDEES & INTRODUCTIONS	
Members	Jennifer Kneller (Chair), Rebecca Alley (Vice Chair), B Adair, Jason Beck, Stephanie Booth, Renate Braul, Rachel Braeuer, Carla Grant, Jane Oxenbury, Shawn Singer, S. Stewart
AHS	Dr. Ted Braun, Heather Cobb, Murray Crawford, Shahnaz Davachi, Lori Roe, Andrea Jackson, Diane McNeil, Marni Panas, Bryan Peffers, Janine Sakatch
Regrets	J. Anderson, Kenyo Arujo, Dr. Kristopher Wells, Jolene Wright
Public	One
Welcome & Introductions	Jenn welcomed all in attendance and went through introductions. Jenn provided a land acknowledgment.
Approval of previous minutes	November 28, 2020 minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.
STANDING ITEMS	
Action items from previous meeting	Action items have been completed from the November 28, 2020 meeting.
Alberta Health Services Zone Update	<p>AHS Permanent Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fort McMurray healthcare site is seeking rainbow friendly designation. Washroom signs have been upgraded to non-gender specific. It is also looking to set up an Indigenous Health Clinic. • The Calgary Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinic is open and testing continues as much as possible. • The Metta Clinic in Calgary has a waitlist of approximately 400; the Gender Clinic's is about 700. Work is underway to address the need for psychiatric referrals for gender affirmation surgery. • AHS' Mental Health & Substance Use portfolio works closely with physicians to make it easier for clients on the waitlist. It's wanting in-person assessments, particularly for adolescents. • The Primary Care portfolio is supporting better transitions of care from hospital-to-home and Connect Care. • AHS is working on inclusive language information for nurses.



- New unit managers at Foothills Hospital are bringing positive new energy and perspective to operations. There has also been movement toward cultural diversity, harm reduction and equality at the site.
- Research will be conducted on text for support pertaining to those admitted to inpatient at psychiatric units then discharged. [Text4Hope](#) is a free text message service for Albertans that helps with anxiety and depression.
- Spring Forum is tentatively scheduled June 9-12. It will be held virtually with a variety of education sessions and speakers.
- The Community Engagement team has supported 181 engagement sessions since March 2020; 42 have been non-COVID related.

Dr. Ted Braun, Vice President & Medical Director-Clinical Operations, AHS

- Pandemic response has been an all-consuming endeavor. Priority is ensuring capacity in inpatient hospital and intensive care units; testing Albertans; contact tracing; vaccination rollout.
- It is anticipated the direct response to the pandemic will continue for at least one more year.
- It is anticipated mental health will be impacted for years to come, post-pandemic. As well, the number of cancer diagnosis are down 30 per cent and heart attack and stroke incidents are also down. This doesn't mean there are fewer cases, rather, it's likely people aren't accessing the health system out of fear it's not safe to do so.
- While continuing the pandemic response, AHS will return its focus on other priorities such as the Alberta surgical initiative to reduce waitlists and the AHS Review.
- The recently developed Conversion Therapy document is housed on AHS Insite.

Marni Panas, Program Manager, Diversity & Inclusion, AHS

- As of January 1, 2021, the Public Health Act – Immunization Regulation requires 'sex at birth' be reported for all immunizations including COVID-19. AHS has provided input from Public Health and Health Information Management (HIM) to the policy team who has made a number of recommendations to reflect AHS' practice.
- Alternately, Connect Care captures 'sex at birth' only when clinically relevant.
- Work is underway on EMS software so every ambulance in Alberta can accommodate multiple gender options in the Emergency Medical Record (EMR).
- All of AHS benefit plans have made adjustment in their system to accommodate multiple gender options.
- The AHS anti-racism advisory group has a survey for all staff, physicians and volunteers that will inform the anti-racism action plan.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites across Alberta are creating diversity and inclusion committees, with over 1000 people involved. • Of note, not all sites are connected to Connect Care yet, so changes to MyChart may not impact everyone quite yet.
Council Round Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is underway with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Police Service on sexual and gender diversity workshops and training. • Work is underway in Lethbridge to create a safe space for LGBTQ2S+ individuals with mental health challenges to access service. In particular, trans-youth are having difficulty finding traditional supports. • In Blackfoot culture there's variant genders and uncertainty how to educate the public about this. • The Community Based Research Centre is conducting a study with the Department of Justice on experiences within the legal system of LGBTQ2S+ people. • A PAC member is assisting the Trans Wellness Initiative with provider education, the importance of communication and using affirming language; another presented on affirming spaces in health care, for health care providers. • The Edmonton Men's Health Clinic (EMHC) Board is seeking a name change that reflects the work it does; better, for queer and trans folks. • A Diversity and Inclusion Committee is being formed within the City of Fort McMurray and will report directly to the CAO. • The Edmonton General Hospital has downgraded from outbreak status to investigation. Staff are filling reopened beds and helping people adjust from hospital or community care to lockdown long term care. • At the Council of Chairs meeting in December, Dr. Verna Yiu asked Council members to help AHS spread the word about COVID-19 vaccinations – from communicating timelines to driving home their importance. • Today is Rachel Brauer's last meeting as her term expires at the end of the month. Council thanked Rachel for her time and contributions and extended an open invitation to connect anytime.
NEW BUSINESS	
Presentation(s)	Addiction and Mental Health Provincial Advisory Council <i>Emily Macphail, Council Chair</i> Highlights include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 16 public members on the Council, from across Alberta. It seeks broader cultural and gender diversity. • There is a variety of experience from folks who sit on groups such as the Youth Addiction and Mental Health, a Provincial Addiction Practice group, Citizen Advisory Team and Patient and Family Advisory group for the new hospital in Edmonton.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They've identified three priorities – increased connection with other Advisory Councils; focus on social determinants of health related to addiction and mental health; provide feedback to existing or emerging issues. • Spoke to common issues people struggling with addiction and mental health encounter, particularly during a pandemic. There has been an increase in youth hospitalizations due to eating disorders across Canada in the last year. As well, feelings of isolation due to less face-to-face social interactions and a significant reduction of in-person service options. • It can be very traumatizing for LGBTQ2S+ people to encounter negative experiences when reaching out to service providers for support. We risk losing them as they are doubtful to reach out again.
Engagement	<p>Janine led engagement with members and AHS Permanent Resource personnel as a bit of a refresh and level-setting as we head into a new work planning year.</p> <p>Council discussed the difference between advisory and advocacy. Highlights of the discussion include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory occurs on a continuum. The work of Council is often both, not one or the other. • Council has successfully self-corrected when it's stepped into advocacy. • Members seek to break down barriers in their role on Council, so those following can benefit from the change. • Council work is collective, for the greater good. • Recognize there is a lot of invisible work undertaken within AHS to see change happen. • Big change may not occur in the short-term but all conversations contribute to the bigger picture of health services. • AHS follows the direction of elected officials and is accountable to the Minister of Health, so individuals can advocate on their own just not on behalf of Council. <p>Discussion demonstrates members are as committed as ever, passionate about the work of Council and focused. Council will use information from this discussion to incorporate into its 2021-22 work commitments (formerly known as Work Plan).</p>
Date of Next Meeting	<p>Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021 Time: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Location: Zoom</p>

Our meetings are open to the public. Dates and locations are [available here](#).
 Visit [Together 4 Health](#) (T4H) to engage with AHS online.